



OWN
Older Women's Network Ireland
Bantracht na Síneair

Spring Newsletter 2011

Dear Members

I hope you are all enjoying the lovely spring weather. It's been very busy in the OWN national office for the past months. Events in Dublin and Cork were well attended and a review of the network provided useful information for planning.

Members enjoyed International Women's Day with a presentation from the travel writer Mary Russell who is also a member of "Dust off your Trumpets" and will be performing in the National Concert Hall as part of the Bealtaine Festival.

As I write there is no information regarding the funding situation. As you know, the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, to whom we report has been disbanded by the new government and we are awaiting confirmation of a new reporting structure. Interim funding was given by the department to cover the period January to March and we received another small amount which will take us up to the end of June until decisions have been made. Our new Minister is Phil Hogan TD, and the Department has been renamed the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

This makes for a very uncertain future for the organisation and staff of OWN - it very difficult to plan a work programme without secured core funding. At present we are working on the basis of a three month programme but I am confident that we will secure the funding necessary to carry on with the work of the organisation.

The OWN Board are busy undertaking training and several executive appointments have been made.

Brenda Whitely, a long time OWN member and former Active Age Officer from Blacklion has been co-opted

onto the Board. Brenda who has been a loyal supporter of OWN over many years will represent members in the Border counties.

As you know, 2011 is the European Year of Volunteering and thanks to the Tolka Area Volunteer Service, a volunteer Website consultant is in the process of updating the website and I would encourage all OWN members to have a look at the site on a regular basis. From May onwards we will put information on the site about events which occur between newsletter mailings. There are also pictures of the various OWN events over the past few months and Paypal - a facility allowing members to pay for membership and events securely on line will be operational by mid May.

For members with mobile phones, we will also be using a text messaging facility to inform members of meetings and events etc.

With the help of a volunteer consultant a marketing strategy is being developed which we hope will raise the profile of the organisation nationwide.

OWN Board and staff are delighted to welcome two temporary additions to the OWN staff - Mary Shanahan has joined us as Policy Officer until the end of July and Elizabeth Mc Cann will be joining us as an Intern from the USA until the middle of August.

Enclosed please find a survey we have been asked to distribute on behalf of DIT which examines the impact of cold weather, please complete and return.

Finally, many thanks for your patience and support over the past months. We hope we will see as many members as possible at all future OWN events over the coming months.

Christine O'Kelly

EVENTS NATIONWIDE

Equality Authority Meeting

The **Equality Authority** is currently working on a strategic plan and has asked for submissions from the public on its work. As you know, the Equality Authority hosts the **Say No to Ageism Campaign** every year. OWN Board member Máire Uí Bhraoin is a member of the consultation group who organise the campaign.

Our new Policy Officer Mary Shanahan will facilitate a meeting to discuss OWN's submission will take place on **Tuesday, May 10th at 3pm the Methodist Hall, Abbey Street** to discuss the submission from OWN.

European Movement Europe Day Seminar, Dublin

On **Thursday 12th May** the European Movement Ireland will host a special Europe Day **lunchtime seminar** at **European Union House, 18 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.**

The aim of the seminar is to provide information on the various ways Irish people can have an influence in the EU system. Speakers on the day will discuss the variety of ways individuals can benefit from opportunities to volunteer, intern and work in the EU while members of the EM Ireland team will be on hand to answer any questions.

Copies of EM Ireland's guide to interning and living in Brussels, the Green Book, will also be available on the day.

If you are interested in attending this **free event** please contact the European Movement at tel: 01 662 5815 or email info@europeanmovement.ie.

European Consumer Agency Presentations to OWN members

The office of the **European Consumer Agency** will be making presentations to OWN members in **Dublin, Cork** and **Galway** during the month of **May**. This is a **free** event and will provide information for members on their consumer rights as an EU citizen. *For details of this*

*event please refer to the **DIARY SECTION** on the back page.*

DRAMA COURSE FOR OWN MEMBERS

A ten week **Drama Course** will commence in the Methodist Hall, Middle Abbey St at 11.00am, on May 16th, the cost of the course is **€10.00**. Places are limited so early booking is advisable.

LAUGHTER YOGA

Laughter really is the best medicine and to prove this a **Laughter Yoga Workshop** has been arranged for the **Methodist Hall, Abbey Street** on **Wednesday May 26th** at 11.00am, all members are invited to attend this event which will cost €2.00 per person (to be collected on the day).

Bealtaine Festival

Age & Opportunity's Bealtaine festival celebrates creativity in old age and is running throughout the month of May. Last year over 101,000 people took part as artists, performers and audience in 2,500 events locally, regionally and nationally in every art form. Further details and the festival programme can be found on www.bealtaine.com.

OWN member, May Deane will be hosting a display of her work in the ILAC Centre Dublin and its well worth a visit. A winner of many international competitions May was featured in the Woman's Way showcasing a variety of the many beautiful eggs she has decorated over the years.

BLOOM

BLOOM Garden Festival takes place in the Phoenix Park June 2nd to Monday 6th. If you book in advance online before the event using promotional code **GFC11** you will receive an extra €2 off the advance ticket saving a total of €7 off the onsite price. For more information log on to www.bloominthepark.com

LAUGHING MATTERS – OWN WORKSHOP JUNE

OWN received funding to host a European workshop for 20 overseas participants, to take part in a week-long workshop in Laughter. Participants – older men and women from Holland, Germany, Spain, Romania, UK and France will be visiting us for the weeklong programme which involves art, drama and music.

These sessions are not open to OWN members but we have organised a number of events which OWN members can attend and we are looking for a number of OWN **Ambassadors** who will meet and greet participants at Dublin airport. Please contact the national office if you are interested in this role.

The participants will be arriving from Saturday June 11th to Monday June 13th and will be returning home on Friday June 17th and Saturday June 18th. If you would like to help us with this part of the workshop please give the national office a call.

OWN members are invited to meet the participants and attend the following events:

Tuesday June 14th

Dog Racing – Harold's Cross Stadium 6.45pm – FREE to all OWN members

Thursday June 16th

Irish Cabaret Night – Arlington Hotel, Bachelors Walk – 3 course Dinner and Show €25.00 per person. Accommodation has been negotiated at a special rate to OWN members of €79 for 2 sharing B&B or €89 for 3 sharing B&B. **BOOKING AND PRE PAYMENT ESSENTIAL WITH OWN NATIONAL OFFICE**

The workshop is fully funded for the overseas participants taking part however the OWN Board have agreed to cover the costs and **offer two OWN members** a place on the one week workshop in Dublin. If you are interested in applying for a place we would like you to write an original limerick which encourages laughter. Applicants should be available for the week June 13th

to June 17th. **Closing date Friday May 20th 2011** to the OWN National Office by post or email.

Here is one to start you off:

No matter how grouchy you're feeling
You'll find a smile more or less healing,
It grows in a wreath
All around the front teeth
Thus preventing the face from congealing

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

(WEAAD) takes place on 15th June every year. The National Centre for the Protection of Older People will be co-hosting a seminar with the HSE and INPEA to mark this day at UCD.

WEAAD was first established by the United Nations five years ago in an effort to raise public awareness about elder abuse in its many forms; physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory and neglect by omission or commission.

Raising public awareness of the issue of elder abuse is vital if this problem is to be tackled. WEAAD serves as a call to action for individuals, organisations and communities to raise awareness about the different forms of elder abuse. WEAAD is an international initiative and events to raise awareness are being organised across the globe

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS FREE EVENT. For more information contact:

Suzanne Murphy : Phone: +353 01 7166467
www.ncpop.ie

OTHER NEWS

As this is the Year of the Volunteer, at an OWN Review Meeting we discussed the possibility of OWN members volunteering in the community. **Care Local**, a Dublin based befriending service has asked us to promote their Plate Pals Programme and publicise their forthcoming fundraising events.

At ninety-six years of age, Jane has been a resident at

St. Mary's for ten years. She has been suffering with dementia and her condition is worsening. One of the most difficult times in Jane's day is mealtime as she can no longer feed herself. Tony, a Care Local volunteer, has been trained to support and encourage residents like Jane at meals and, with his help, Jane has gained weight, communicates with Tony and even laughs.

Care Local needs more volunteers in St. Mary's to help others like Jane. Just one hour a week is enough to make a huge difference in someone's life. Please contact Care Local on (01) 612 8000 or info@carelocal.ie and ask about becoming a Plate Pal.

John Lonergan, former Governor of Mountjoy, will be launching the **2nd Annual Docklands Book Sale**. This major three-day event is run by the five organisations that make up the Docklands Senior Provider Forum: Care Local, Docklands Senior Forum, Lourdes Day Care Centre, Ringsend Community Centre and Nascadh CDP, with support from Dublin City Council, Docklands Development Authority and the HSE.

All books will be sold for €1 and there will be up to 30,000 books to choose from. The proceeds from this sale go directly to providing critical services for older people living in the Docklands area. More information is available on www.carelocal.ie or call Linda Desmond on (01) 612 8000.

Where: National College of Ireland, IFSC Campus

When: Thursday 26th May 1pm – 7pm

Friday 27th May 10am - 7pm

Saturday 28th May 10am – 4pm

Launch of Results from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA)

On 9th May, Minister for Health and Children Dr. James Reilly will launch the first results from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA). The study has exceeded the target of 8,000 interviews with a response rate of 60%. People interested in attending the launch can contact Jacinta O'Grady at jogrady@tcd.ie.

OWN Members are invited to AkiDwa's Africa Day Celebration

Killarney Court Community Hall, Unit 2, Killarney Court,
Buckingham Street - upper, Dublin1
On Saturday, 28th May 2011
Time: 11.30am – 5.00pm

On December 18th 2009 the United Nations' (UN) General Assembly declared the year 2011 to be the International Year for People of African Descent. To mark the year and in celebration of Africa day 2011 AkiDwa will hold a whole day event. Activities include: Exhibition of arts and crafts, African fabrics & souvenirs, food fair, music, drumming, coral bead making, story telling for children, Education stand-My continent, Hair braiding, face painting, Hena, massage, African Folk songs and more!

Come and explore Africa. Not to be missed!

For more details contact:
amaka@akidwa.ie or info@akidwa.ie
www.akidwa.ie
018349851, 0863096859

AkiDwa Background: Established in 2001 AkiDwa is a network of African and migrant women living in Ireland. AkiDwa's vision is a just society where there is equal opportunity and equal access to resources in all aspects of society: social, cultural, economic, civic and political!

NEWS

National Positive Ageing Strategy update

In response to a question from Michael Kitt T.D. in Dáil Eireann, Minister for Health and Children, Dr. James Reilly stated that policy for older people was a priority for the new government and the Programme for Government gave a commitment to complete the National Positive Ageing Strategy. He said that work on the strategy was ongoing and a group comprising representatives of twelve national non-governmental organisations with an interest in older people's issues had been established. OWN is a member of the group.

However, no timeline was set for the release of the strategy.

Kathleen Lynch given portfolio for Older People

The ministerial portfolio for older people and ageing-related issues has been assigned to Minister of State for Disability, Equality and Mental Health, Kathleen Lynch. Speaking about the appointment, Minister for Health and Children Dr. James Reilly said: "Her responsibilities include ensuring the supply of more and better care for older people in the community and in residential settings, a further priority of this Government".

CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM OWN MEMBERS

Spots and Stripes

It was with some trepidation that I stepped through the front doors of the Holy Faith Secondary School in Killester, last Tuesday, March 15th. I did not know what to expect of the "Spots and Stripes" sports day. Were great things going to be expected of me when it was about all I could do to stroll around the local park?

I need not have worried at all. We were greeted in the library by Jacqui Ward, Co-Ordinator from the Northside Partnership. She explained to us the games we would be playing and their basic rules. We would be attempting Giant Ludo, Pictogram, Throw-the-

Wellie and Boules, to name but a few. After a bracing cup of tea we headed for the hall, where we were divided into "Spots" and "Stripes" and received a badge accordingly. Then we were each assigned a transition year student – mine was Sarah and she looked healthy and athletic, so I started to feel optimistic!

We began with Giant Ludo where we were expected to throw a light Frisbee into a bin. It was harder than it looked and as if they had a mind of their own, even hitting a transition year student on the nose! However, we soon developed a style and those Frisbees began to pile up in the bins in no time.

It seemed no time before we moved onto our next game, "Pictogram". It was hilarious as we directed students who had their eyes closed to draw objects which the others had to guess. Some pretty strange drawings surfaced but the "Spots" and "Stripes" were nothing if not astute and guessed many of these mysterious objects correctly.

Next it was out to the beautifully maintained grounds to experience the all-weather pitch. We started with "Bowls" and the skittles were flying in all directions. The sun appeared and made the scene warm and pleasant. Next was "Throw-the-Wellie" not as easy as it sounds. Sometimes with all the effort in the world the wellie would fly up and land almost at the thrower's toes! After a while we got the hang of it, though, and we were earning top points for the "Stripes" (or so we thought!!).

We finished with "Giant Jenga" a game of skill and precision. It was great fun and we were on tender hooks as block after block was removed leaving gaping holes and barely suspended bricks.

Back to the hall where we learnt that the "Spots" had won the competition by miles. But it didn't seem to matter. We lined up for photos in high spirits and the students seemed happy and content.

We returned to the library where the students served us delicious sandwiches with tea and coffee they had prepared beforehand.

I have to compliment the transition year girls – they were pleasant, helpful and polite. I was most impressed by the beautiful school and felt very welcomed by the teachers, especially Aidan White, Transition Year Co-Ordinator.

The games were very well organised and thought out. The day was enjoyable and memorable. And although in the end the other team won the "Spot" prize, I like to think that we really earned our "STRIPEs"!!

Iseult Bourke (member)

(For pictures of the Spots and Stripes event log onto the OWN website www.ownireland.ie)

BED FOR A NIGHT

At the suggestion of OWN Member Phil Bates, we have been asked if OWN members would consider offering a bed for the night to members travelling to OWN events. If anyone is interested in hosting an OWN member please contact the office and we will keep a list in the national office of accommodation.

REPORTS

A 'U-shaped' happiness curve means happiness steadily increases after age 50, according to new research.

A report presented at the UK's Royal Economic Society's annual conference showed that many people experience a mid-life dip after their 20s, before starting to feel satisfied with life again after 50.

Scientists are unable to explain the report's findings but suggest that people tend to assume more wisdom and adapt to life's aspirations better as they get older.

People aged over 65 said they thought it was nicer to be 25, but insisted they feel happier now than they did at that age.

The happiness survey involved respondents from Britain, Switzerland and Germany.

The report by Bert Van Landeghem concluded: 'Both the 25-year-old and 65-year-old might agree that it is nicer to be 25 than to be 65. But the 65 year old might nevertheless be more satisfied, as he has learned to be

satisfied with what he has.'

Psychologists also said that having money makes you happier, but only in cases where you have a lot more than your friends and neighbours, and that a person's social standing or status matters more.

Focus on ageing strategies

This month's CARDI "Focus on" article examines government approaches to ageing issues. It assesses strategies and policies on ageing as well as the structures put in place to implement those strategies.

Key findings

- The US was the first country to have a specific strategy on older people ageing, introduced in 1965 with the Older Americans Act.
- The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was the first international agreement that recognised the potential of older people to contribute to the development of their societies. It is due to be reviewed in 2012.
- The US introduced a commissioner to champion the rights of older people in 1965. Wales has since appointed a commissioner, and Northern Ireland is due to in 2011.
- Two out of the 34 OECD member countries have dedicated senior ministers to support policy decisions on older people's issues.
- Strategies on ageing need to be designed to balance the specific support required today of older people but harness the contribution of older people, through supporting older workers, carers and volunteers now

and in the future.

FOCUS ON WOMEN'S AID

Domestic Violence – Help and Support

Domestic violence affects 1 in 5 women in Ireland and it can affect women from all walks of life, at any age. Domestic violence can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or financial abuse. The tactics of domestic violence used by perpetrators are deliberate, controlling and unrelenting. The repetitive nature of the abuse has the effect of wearing a woman down gradually, making her doubt herself, putting her in fear, isolating her from supports such as friends and family and making her feel worthless and degraded. Even where no physical abuse has actually been perpetrated, the threat of such violence can have an equally devastating impact.

Are you Afraid of Someone who is Close to You?

Thousands of women in Ireland are living with domestic violence on a daily basis. It is important that any woman who is being abused feels she can talk to someone, whether that is a family member or a friend, a colleague or a support service like Women's Aid. **No one deserves to be abused and no one should suffer in silence.**

If you are experiencing domestic violence, Women's Aid can help. If you would like to talk to someone who understands, ring the **Women's Aid National Freephone Helpline on 1800 341 900 (open 10am to 10pm, 7 days a week).**

Women who ring the Helpline often simply want to talk about their relationship. It may be something that happened recently that hurt or confused them or it may be something that has emerged over time. Women on the Helpline may be speaking to someone about the abuse for the first time, after suffering for years or even decades.

Helpline staff will listen with understanding and confidentiality and will assist you to make your own choices about your life and offer information about your options. Women's Aid also provides a Dublin-based one

to one support service and can accompany women to court.

Call today in confidence on 1800 341 900 or go to www.womensaid.ie for more information.

POSTCARD PROJECT

We would like to invite all OWN members to submit a piece of Artwork for a Postcard. The artwork has to be A4 size and can be in any media – pencil drawing, painted work or collage. Please note that the winning postcard will be reduced to postcard size.

The title of the artwork:

The Joys and Sorrows of Older Women finding a Voice

Selected artwork will be reproduced as a postcard printed and distributed at all OWN events over the coming year and it will be used to promote the network. All OWN members are invited to take part in this project either on an individual or group basis. The project has to be completed by the end of June (June 30th) and you can enter as many as you like. The artwork chosen for the project will be displayed at the summer event (details to follow).

OWN VOUCHERS

To facilitate members who wish to pay for friends and family to attend OWN events we now have OWN vouchers which can be bought for any amount and used towards events and memberships. Please contact the national office for more information.

IF YOU HAVE ANY NEWS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS TO SHARE WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU BY EMAIL, BY LETTER OR PHONE TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.

DIARY DATES

May 10th Tuesday Equality

Methodist Hall Abbey St. Dublin at 3pm

Authority Submission Meeting	Book with OWN National Office
May 12th Thursday lunchtime seminar	European Movement Europe Day Seminar, Dublin European Union House, 18 Dawson Street, Dublin 2. Book with European Movement 01-6625815
May 16th Drama Course- 10 weeks	Methodist Hall Abbey St. Dublin at 11.00am
May 17th European Consumer Centre	Methodist Hall Abbey St. Dublin at 11.00am
May 25th Laughter Yoga Workshop	Methodist Hall Abbey St. Dublin at 11.00am Cost: €10.00 for 10 weeks
May 20th Laughing Matters Workshop	Closing Date for Limerick Competition
European Consumer Centre	Ballyphehane/Togher Library, Tory Top Road, Cork, at 11am
May 28th AkiDwa's African Day Celebration	Killarney Court Community Centre, Buckingham St. Contact 01-8349851 or 0863096859
May 30th European Consumer Centre	Ballybane Community Resource Centre, Galway, at 11.00am
June 2nd - June 6th	Bloom Garden Festival Phoenix Park Book Online using code GFC11
June 12th - June 18th	Laughter Workshop AMBASSADORS NEEDED CONTACT OWN
June 14th -	Harolds Cross Dog Racing FREE TO OWN MEMBERS 6.45pm
June 15th	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day UCD Free Seminar – contact Suzanne Murphy 01-7166467
June 16th	Irish Cabaret Night Arlington Hotel Bachelors Walk Dublin Dinner and Show €25.00 Optional overnight accommodation available
June 30th Postcard Project	Final closing date of Postcard Project which should be sent to the OWN National Office